Wondering and Asking Why

RHODA HARRIS

OF all the attitudes which children bring to school there is nothing that cooperates more with the purposes of education than the spirit of curiosity. Given a responsive environment this almost makes it possible for children to educate themselves. The vital spark of curiosity is easily suppressed by the wrong kind of education which heaps answers upon a child until he is overloaded with verbal information. It requires great tact and self-control for an adult to give enough and yet not too much in answering the endless whys that make up so large a part of the conversation of young children.

The adult world often confuses curiosity and wonder. There is a certain kind of contemplation which children voice which is not curiosity seeking an answer but a sort of rhetorical curiosity emerging from imaginative wonderings about a world which is new and unexplored.

Sebastian sat at lunch eating a large baked potato. Opposite him sat Charles, also at work on a potato. In the desultory way of young children involved in the process of feeding themselves they wiggled and gazed, and to the impatient teacher seemed to have their minds totally unfocused.

But between mouthfuls Sebastian was saying to his companion, illustrating with his spoon, "If an airship goes up and up and up, does it *hit* the sky? She says it's just a hole and you can't hit it."

A teacher watched three children for some time as they sat apparently lost to the world around them in the midst of a very busy group. One turned a hammer thoughtfully over and over. The others gazed solemnly at him. There was fitful conversation.

Finally the teacher said, "What are you doing, Willie?"

"I'm thinking."

"What are you thinking about?"

"Well," said Willie, "I was thinking about Jesus. If He is the Son of God or not. I say He is the Son of God and Tony says He isn't. I wonder."

A class of six-year-olds went on a trip which included a subway ride. In the class was a new child who had never before been in a subway.

After a long silence she said softly, "I wonder where the sky is now."

Those who know children are familiar with these wonder questions and the wise adult knows that these are not the moments to jolt a child out of his contemplation and wonder by heaping facts upon him. There are erudite adults who know so much that they cannot bear to stop at the point where a child is satisfied. Others are content to enjoy the intellectual companionship and imaginings of children in their speculations about the whys and wherefores of the world as they see it and such a parent or teacher does not feel compelled to pump information into them whenever they voice their wonderings. She adds to their information only when it increases their enjoyment of the subject and leads them on to more interesting speculations, and she does it at a time when her contribution does not break the thoughtful, contemplative mood in which the child is speculating for himself.

There is a current belief that all children's questions should be answered truthfully, fully, at the time and in as much detail as possible. During the first weeks of school the children of parents who follow this dictum are the despair of the teacher. It is difficult to get their attention, impossible to make them listen and one's best interpretations fall upon deaf ears. It is appalling to discover how, given half a chance, children's curiosity can increase at bed time, meal time, putting away time and all other times when a succession of whys have been found helpful in postponing the moment of going to bed or prolonging some other necessary routine. It is not hard to detect these ques-

tions whereby children stall. One "why" follows another, the child is very inattentive to the answer, he does not act or think in response to it and will continue his questions indefinitely.

In a school where the children take a mid-morning rest, one class had a large number of "why children." Day after day one child after another disrupted the whole rest period.

"Why do we have to rest in school?"

"Is it resting if you don't sleep?"

"If my mother says I don't have to rest, do I have to?"

"If we rest, why don't you?"

"If I rest here do I have to go to bed later?"

The teacher began by patiently explaining. At the end of a month, the rest time was still not an established routine.

At this point the teacher simply announced, "No more questions. Everybody really understands by now. We're all going to rest an hour and that's all there is to it."

Welcome Relief

To HER amazement the group settled down and rested. It seems better to settle such matters of routine, which have to do with sleeping, eating, wearing proper clothes, all matters of health and safety, arbitrarily and with little talking. Children often get talked at much too much on these matters about which they are not experienced enough or competent enough to have opinions or to decide for themselves. And while the adult is painstakingly explaining the whys and wherefores of some simple routine the child's mind is busy making up the next question. This kind of conversation between child and adult seems unprofitable from every point of view. It is not sincere, it gives the child bad listening habits, and it does not do anything to foster a good relationship between the two since, down underneath the questions and answers, the child and adult are in conflict and not in harmony.

There are three general classifications under which children's questions fall: the whys and wherefores of science; the whys and wherefores of conduct; the whys and wherefores of sex, religion, death and other mysteries of life.

One becomes able to judge of the sincerity of the questions, and to detect false questions by the child's mood. The right response to these true and vital questions really comes only after long and continuous companionship between the adult and the child. It cannot be achieved in large spasmodic doses any more than nourishment can be administered in single large portions. A child's fund of information should grow slowly and should be within his age capacity. When a group of children share a common experience such as going down the harbor together they get far more from each other than they could possibly get from an adult reading to them about the harbor. What the adult can do is to keep their thoughts on the subject, to see that one child does not monopolize the conversation, to help the children organize their information and give it back to them as a total experience on their age level.

Following the Child's Lead

No TEACHER can know with any group at what point to start in the giving of information or how far to go, except as she takes her cue from the children in that group. When a five-year-old group says spontaneously, "The first thing you do when you build a house is to tear a house down," it makes one realize how much more truly the child sees this world than we do. When a group of seven-year-olds announces, "There were Indians on Manhattan once and do you know what they did? Well, before they went away they took their canoes and lots of things up to a big building on Broadway and left them there," and the rest of the group nods solemnly in the affirmative, the teacher lets them discuss this among themselves as far as they can go through their own speculation. She does not feel that she must jump in and check up on them and set them straight. She does try to help them through their own thinking to go on to a truer interpretation and she gives only such facts as seem real and add more content for their own thinking. She helps them not to argue falsely but she lets them think their way through.

One reason for delaying the reading and telling of fairy tales until a child is seven or eight years old is that these tales have no relation to real curiosity but belong to the day-dream world. They should, therefore, come only after a child has had sufficient experience in the real world to develop his alert and seeking curiosity about it. Fantastic thinking fosters and gives material for day-dreaming. There is sufficient mystery and beauty in the real world to supply young children with wonder, to feed their imaginations and to give rise to real questions rather than fantastic ones. It does not thwart imagination to turn it loose among real things.

Parents and teachers should use their ingenuity to find experiences which feed this kind of wonder. A walk in the forest where the mushrooms have come up over night is just as thrilling to a child and a much better contribution to his thinking than sitting at home reading about elves and gnomes. A ride on a ferry

boat feeds the wonder and whets the curiosity of a city child as much as the story of *Jack and the Bean Stalk* and is much more stimulating to his growth than the tale of phantasy. When children are older, folk tales and legends are part of their rightful heritage, but given too young, they are over-stimulating and sidetrack their prime business of finding their way in a big new world.

A child's world belongs to him. We do not know how it looks for we see it from several feet higher up. We do not know how confusing and overwhelming it is to those just beginning to explore it and trying to organize it so that they feel safe and happy in it. Children's questions about the world's wonders should not be used by us as an opportunity to tell all we know or think we know on every occasion. Neither should children be allowed to use questions to bully us in crucial matters of health and safety.

Learning by Experience

Schools that are laboratories in living and doing offer education that is of more value to children than adult-imposed book learning.

CAROLINE PRATT

CHILDREN learn more in their first three years than in any other three years of life. During this halcyon period they learn because they want to, and by experience. Theirs is the method of all pioneers, of all experimenters, the method that genius uses. Before ever they enter one of our schools to be "educated," they have found out in their own way a great deal that they will always use and which they never will forget.

Prompted by an inherent (and holy) curiosity, they have already taught themselves to walk toward things they want to grasp. They stumble and fall again and again and learn to get to their feet, pulling themselves up by means of a chair, a trouser leg, or a skirt. Sometimes they simply rise from the floor in a way that seems to the onlooker miraculous. They balance first on one foot, then on the other, until walking is accomplished. They are helped a bit, but they would have learned without help. While they are putting themselves through a walking course, they experiment with talking. They imitate lip movement and note what it produces in sound. They babble and crow and shout and then they reproduce their own sounds and learn the capacity of their vocal chords. If not too narrowly confined, these young children advance from self-knowledge to an examination of the world they live in and learn, for instance, the relation between delivery cars and the food which they eat. They learn that coal comes to their building in trucks and that it has to do with keeping them warm. From these small beginnings they question and so expand their experience with knowledge about their environment.

Because adults have dropped this experimental method—dropped it perforce when they entered school where everything was arranged for them—they sometimes fail to observe and test the method as it reappears among young children. They fail to take the child's pioneering method into account, to respect it, to give it elbow room. They fail to see in the kicking, squirming, yelling youngster an experimenter, one of those who keep the ball of life rolling, whose troublesome experiments of today may lead to the vital discoveries of tomorrow.

For adults have learned by a slow and very deceptive method. They have become dependent upon books, not only for stimulation, but for the actual solving of problems. They have lost the power and they have lost the will to observe and weigh and listen and conclude; and they fail to observe and weigh and listen and conclude about what is good for their children. Hence the trimming process. The child mustn't do this, he mustn't do that. Unlike the animal of a lower order, many children find that they have been born into an environment of adult opportunity only. Even the chairs are not theirs to do with as they please. They must not push them over and play train; there is no place suitable to use a ball. They must learn to be polite, to say "please" and "thank you," to take hats off when in the house.

And so our child gradually renounces his own

method and accepts the discipline of the school, discipline with a tendency to rid him of all disposition to question, to discover, to conquer the world for himself. Curiosity, that life-giving human attribute, is nourished only by discovery. To discover is to live at the highest pitch of interest and concentration. *What* one discovers is never so important to the individual, nor, I believe, to society, as *that* one discovers. Whether *what* one discovers is important or not, *that* one discovers is important each and every time. It is important because it has a drive behind it. Under the stimulus of discovery new drives are initiated, new goals attained which in their turn become starting points for fresh adventures.

Helping and Leaving Alone

CHILDREN vary as to method, direction of interest and degree of accomplishment. It is true, of course, that children appear in the world variously handicapped. In the prenatal period some needed supply for a perfect brain may have been shut off, or the blood supply may not have contained the right elements, or may not have been sufficient, producing possibly in the one case a heart that does not function normally and in the other a poorly functioning digestive system. But the number affected by such innate handicaps is actually very small; and after birth the human element is mainly responsible for all inequalities. How the child is treated becomes very important. And as the human element closest to the child is usually female, some woman usually conditions his environment.

For some reason, the female pattern is a helping one. Until or unless she learns better by experience, the mother's impulse is always to help the child. She wants to "make it easy" for him. If she selects a nursemaid, it is with this quality in mind that she makes her decision. In an otherwise well regulated home the constancy of this attention produces dependent children. Children learn to turn to others instead of relying on themselves. It is not too much to say that the majority of children who come to school at the age of three are too much centered in *people*. No one is blameworthy for this. Besides being by nature helpful, women have to care for babies during the months when they are completely dependent. To break this habit a mother must go against her very nature. It is a rare person who is able to wean her first child psychologically as well as physically in good time. Often the later ones, if there are any, fare better.

As children become three, four, five, they must have wider opportunities for experiment. Up to this time children have found ample opportunity for development in the use to which they can put their own bodies. But as they gradually become interested in the relation of things to their bodies, a new provision must be made for their mental growth. They must be given carefully considered things which will be of use to them in reconstructing their environment in play. They should begin to draw, to paint, to use clay and blocks and a few relevant playthings.

What do children find to interest them in the larger world? I should answer that moving things attract them first of all—trains, buses, boats, people and what they are doing. A man in a hole in the pavement tremendously interests and stimulates the curiosity of children. What is he doing there? When will he come out? What sort of man is he? A wise teacher leaves many of these questions unanswered at the time, trusting to the child's subsequent discoveries in the street to throw light upon this one.

Everyday Activities

PREFERABLY children should make their answers to "Where are the trucks going?" and "What are they loaded with?" by trips to the docks and railroads. They should discover for themselves that railroads and boats carry many different kinds of what they learn to call freight. They should make their own contacts with the operators of boats and trains, and learn where these interesting, moving, important things are bound for. They should see the great waterways and bridges and soon afterwards reproduce them with blocks and lumber.

As the children grow older, they carry their inherent experimental method into other fields with the help of a teacher and a loosely but positively organized program. Jobs require trips to stores to purchase things. A school store requires extended buying at wholesale and selling again at retail. Wholesalers need warehouses for supplies and the children visit these. Finally they begin to require books as sources of information; and through these, with the teacher's help, they extend their inquiries beyond the confines of their own city. They make maps instead of floor schemes. They are pushing back their own horizons.

Through having a real post office of their own, children investigate the city system. They learn how mail was distributed in early times. They see the relation of railroads to mail and finally they become interested in airplane routes and perhaps visit an airport.

Then it is always pertinent to know the people who have blazed new trails, the early settlers, those who pushed West by caravan, or in building railroads kept communication open with the East; and in inquiring

into their methods the children learn about Indians and white folk and their difficulties and how they settled them. The children use their findings to make plays which are highly satisfactory to themselves and often interesting to adults as drama.

Hand-printing and later press work send children to books; early research in their environment has prepared them to make the most of these added sources of information. They go farther into the past and discover manuscript writing. They learn much about the periods of history before the invention of the printing press. They visit museums and libraries; they read interesting, lively literature concerning other times. Their curiosity carries them into all sorts of new explorations. They visit print shops and newspaper plants. They learn about early printing presses when some child undertakes to make one. The research is all individual; seldom do the children get the same thing from a trip. Each is encouraged to follow his own line of investigation. With a loosely organized program every child's contribution is pertinent to the general subject and can be used in building up a play, in contributing to a magazine, in making murals. School may become a children's laboratory that serves their vital inborn love of research and investigation. The slogan of such a school is, "We learn by experience." From our own observations, carried on for twenty years, of children carving out their own education, we believe there is no better method.

Too long have we been dominated by the book-worshipping universities, by their insistence that we must "get children ready" for them whether they ever go or not. The elementary school has a job of its own to do. It should be a place where each child will be able to live as he should be able to live as an adult; his leisure important; his work a pleasure; living life, not merely enduring it.

A boy of six on a trip to a printing establishment once watched a man getting folders ready to send out. There were three movements required. Finally he asked a profound question, "Does that man have to do that all day long and every day in the week?"

Is it not possible that we may look to such children, clear-eyed and sure-footed, to shape a better world?

See What I've Made!

Doing and making satisfies the child's deep need to master the question-provoking world of things.

GERTRUDE M. ABBIHL

WORDS are not the only, and often not the most satisfying, ways of helping children satisfy their " 'satiable curiosity." Perhaps they would ask fewer "nuisance questions" if they had more opportunity to work out some of their innate desire to find out about things through handling and making and doing. Experience with school children shows how eagerly they respond to the stimulus of simple materials that are within their capacity to use. Activity and physical contact with material things seem to give them a certain kind of satisfaction which they may perhaps not get from other kinds of answering, whether by word of mouth or from the printed page.

Imagine a child confronted with a tool rack of new shining hammers and saws who will not ask, "What are they for?" When the child is shown how to use the tool, he will probably want to swing into immediate action with it. Perhaps the simple satisfaction of handling the tool will suffice for the present. One four-year-old watched the tool rack quietly, and finally asked his teacher what the hammer was for. She showed him how to pound some short nails into a piece of soft wood. He tried it, drove in about four nails, then put the hammer down and walked away, grinning contentedly. This is the first step in a series of experiences which, with adequate opportunity and enough—but not too much—guidance, will lead on to more constructive and complete experiments. One day, for instance, some seventh grade children were busy with problems of their own in various media while the art teacher was making a plaster cast of a clay object. The novelty of the casting process attracted the children from their tasks at intervals. Several watched silently. Others voiced their curiosity, "What's it for?" then

finally "Can we make some?" Their satisfaction was not to be appeased by answers to questions, or even by the manipulation of the plaster; they wanted the thrill of actually going through the process themselves, and having this new product for their own.

The Sense of Touch

CHILDREN are eager to explore, to learn from every new object and new material in the art room. Once their curiosity is aroused, the impulse to touch the object follows. Often a pat on a smooth glazed surface, or the gentle rubbing of the hand over a polished pewter dish, or the rolling of a lump of clay into a ball satisfies the craving to move and handle objects simply for the love of action. We are all familiar with the children who will pick up a hammer and aimlessly bang the nearest object, or a knife and whittle, or a saw and run it back and forth over whatever comes handy, just to get the feel of the thing. These are not "destructive" tendencies, though they need to be guided and provided for in ways that both protect the "untouchables" in the surroundings and also give the child himself more positive and constructive means of experimenting.

Besides handling things to satisfy their joy of action, children like to poke around and push things to see what will happen next. The curiosity which inspires manipulation, though idle at first, may be wisely stimulated through making or doing something significant or vital to their interests. Children's ideas naturally find expression in action, and since there is a close association between physical activity and emotion, children are happy in this way of satisfying their curiosity. This feeling of pleasantness, one of the outstanding characteristics of a "satisfier," is particularly important to educators since psychological research has definitely shown that "the greater the satisfaction the surer the learning."

First-Hand Experiments

THE fact that activities are so satisfying is recognized in progressive schools in connection with unit teaching. Children not only read about Indians making bowls out of coils of clay, but actually make bowls for themselves and decorate them with symbolic designs. Children make telegraph sets and really send messages across the room to each other. This sort of thing goes on from the planting of gardens in the first grade to the building of furniture and the printing of programs in the junior high school. All these are vital experiences growing from the interests of the child and insuring greater knowledge. Even if the result is not perfect, or successful, positive learning may often be gained through negative results.

A strong emotional appeal in doing a thing for oneself is the thrill a new experience gives. It is an adventure to try something new. Everyone's eyes brighten, enthusiasm runs rampant, there is a barrage of questions and the fun begins. A seven-year-old group, which had made paper cut-outs of characters from a story which they were reading in the classroom, saw a puppet play. Imagine the excitement and fun they had discovering how to make puppets. There was cloth to be sewed, clay to mold, wood to struggle with, and paints to try out. Now picture the delight in manipulating the strings, making the little actors strut about, and talking for them. Children are such realists; they lived the story, and gained clearer ideas through these muscular experiences, than they could ever get from reading alone. This first-hand knowledge was more vital than book knowledge, and hence more satisfying.

Fruits of Labor

THERE is value in a child's being able to see what he was thinking about, in having concrete evidence to show for his efforts. It gives not only a tangible satisfaction to curiosity but also develops a sense of personal power. He has had a struggle to express his mental concepts. He could not be vague or ignorant, he had to meet problems and solve them to gain his end. Working in a group with other children and producing an acceptable article have given him social approval. In addition he has realized the urge to succeed. During all this process, the child had to be honest. The product was before his eyes and the eyes of others. There could be no bluffing, no slipshod methods. When he has succeeded, his confidence in himself is established. He is brimming over with pride. "See what I made!" expresses complete self-satisfaction.

This emotion which accompanies doing and making is the keystone of the particular kind of deep, inner satisfaction which characterizes the release of curiosity through the handling of materials, or making and doing. The actual process of construction has more fascination than the interest in the method as such or even in the finished product. What is felt is more important than what is known. An aesthetic quality has been added to the satisfaction of curiosity. Carleton Noyes has expressed it, "It is not enough to be told things; we must make trial of them and live them out in our own experience before they become true for us."

Curiosity as a Symptom

The answers of children to their own questions furnish the best clues as to whether the drive behind them is neurotic or the natural manifestation of curiosity.

DUDLEY D. SHOENFELD

CURIOSITY, like all other human instincts, has two aspects which tend to make of an individual either an asset or a problem to his community. Its forces begin to manifest themselves at birth and continue as energy throughout life. Since all energy has both destructive and constructive properties, our task as physicans, educators and parents is similar to that of the engineer. We must aid in the conversion and transformation of this energy so that the individual and mankind benefit by it. Civilization owes its advance to the drive of curiosity. Wherever progress has been made, this trait has played an important role. Learning, knowledge, realization of the complex world we live in are all dependent upon its continuation.

The destructive aspect of curiosity often manifests itself as a symptom of maladjustment, which we recognize as a forerunner of mental conflict. The groundwork for a future neurosis may in this manner be established. When the purpose of this instinctual drive is a desire for further knowledge of the world we live in or the wish to clear up a thought process, it is not indicative of profound conflict but of a healthy drive. But when it is accompanied by anxiety, discomfort, guilt, apprehension and other nervous states, the problem becomes one of curiosity as a sign of unsolved questionings and phantasies.

A child may ask, "What is lightning and thunder?" You answer the question in words that he can understand, and that solves his problem. He goes about his daily task and when occasion arises he makes use of this additional knowledge. It aids him in his contact with his environment and he is satisfied.

A child may, however, repeatedly ask, "What is lightning and thunder?" without ever seeming to be satisfied with the answer. His daily life indicates constant thought about this to the exclusion of other interests and activities. Curiosity has manifested itself here as a symptom of some nervous condition or conflict, and the question must be construed as symptomatic. The solution of such conflict rests in an understanding of its source. Within the limits of this brief discussion, one cannot go very deeply into its implications; but in general one may say that in the light of our knowledge of child psychology the difficulty will probably be found to be in some way related to the environment.

An understanding of curiosity is never complete without a thorough knowledge of its earliest manifestations. In early childhood its indulgence is unhampered by hesitation, shame or embarrassment. On the other hand, shame and embarrassment are as a rule the reactions of the parents to these infantile interests. Since the infant's world is very small and restricted, it is natural that curiosity should exhibit itself along bodily interests and that sexual inquisitiveness should loom large. As the infant grows older and the environment becomes larger, this sexual interest is gradually transferred to interests in the environment. Since this metamorphosis is effected by repression and sublimation, it is essential for parents and educators to have a working knowledge of such psychological mechanisms. (Psychoanalysis has contributed more than any other school of thought to our understanding of this process; but in this brief discussion we can only call the reader's attention to it.)

The degree and nature of curiosity that the child manifests in this larger environment will reflect the parents' attitude in the handling of the child's bodily inquisitiveness. The treatment of this trait and its sublimation into other activities and interests are primary positive forces in education. Evasion, untruthfulness, failure to appreciate the seriousness of the question can only result in stifling this dynamic drive. A facetious attitude or a violation of confidence erects a barrier between parent and child which may exist throughout life.

Answering questions without taking into account the intellectual equipment of the child is equally harmful and may itself contribute to the growth of unfounded fears. Whether the thing is told him directly, or whether it is overheard by him, whatever

a child misunderstands in his attempt to grasp significance and meaning, results in fear. Very often this is part of the origin of such common fears as dread of the dark, of storms, of animals, of God and death. The extremely limited scope of the child's experience and contact with his environment makes it necessary for the parent to see the problem through the eyes of childhood. Answers therefore must be direct and simple. They must not suggest new questions to the interrogator. It is here that difficulties are either made or surmounted.

Take that most familiar of questions, "Where do babies come from?" The curiosity it shows can be satisfied directly by the statement that the baby grows in the mother's body. The answer is simple, it is truthful, it is satisfying and not difficult for the child to accept and understand. True, after the answer has been digested, the child may come back with another. If successive questions are met in a similar manner, it will be found that the child as a rule will be able to assimilate the new information. He catches the tone of the parent's answer and appreciates a wholesome attitude in regard to a question which is in reality serious to him. The parent remains the source of information for the child. There is no need to seek other authorities. The position of the parent has been firmly established in the life of the child. Surely there can be no greater incentive for parents to develop their own understanding of and sympathy.

The results of evasion, untruthfulness and lack of appreciation of the spirit in which the child asks this question are equally apparent. To answer a question about where babies come from with a dissertation on the phenomenon of childbirth or a discussion of the physiology and anatomy involved, without taking into account the child's limited ability to assimilate it, adds nothing to his fund of knowledge, or to his sense of satisfaction. It creates confusion and a distorted conception of the whole question. It may even be the prime cause of later fears related to childbirth and other bodily phenomena.

If one wants to understand the mental equipment of the child before answering his questions, it is always helpful to try to get his own answer; for it is generally true that no child will ask a question without having already formulated a reply satisfactory to himself. This will be logical and intelligent, but one must remember that this logic and intelligence are proportionate to the age of the child and along the lines of his infantile mental processes. A mature response involving adult theories and requiring adult comprehension may be rejected, for the child's own logic will be more in harmony with his age and therefore more acceptable to his understanding.

Perhaps the greatest value in asking the child for his answer before attempting one's own, lies in the clues it furnishes as to the child's inner needs and unconscious purposes. The reply he has already made for his own satisfaction is the surest symptom of whether his curiosity drive is diverging into confusion and serious misunderstanding, or is passing through natural, constructive steps toward maturity.

Sex Questions— Asked and Unasked

How children—and parents—feel about sex interests is fully as important as what they say.

BENJAMIN C. GRUENBERG

FOR measuring "curiosity," no standard scale has as yet been set up, but we assume that some of it is present in every child, for better or for worse. When the inevitable questions about sex come, how do we as adults respond?

Today many parents may be likely to take curiosity too seriously. For while the urge to ask deserves consideration, and while it is unfair to the child to repress it arbitrarily, whether in general or in relation to topics that make adults uncomfortable, it may be necessary to recognize that a question is not always a question. This is important for parents to remember, since an undiscerning or sentimental encouragement of "curiosity" as if it were a manifestation of genius, places at the disposal of the child an instrument for pestering adults quite unrelated to his needs.

But some parents still offer answers that are not answers at all, "It is so because nature made it that way." Or they change the subject, "That isn't nice to talk about." And there are those who say nothing to the child because of their own uncertainties. By the time they have quieted their anxiety, it very often happens that the child is no longer asking questions. This is so because when the child first asks questions, in the early years, he does it in the simple faith that he will be answered. But if the parent is disturbed by the question, is unable to answer immediately and directly, fumbles, hems and haws, puts the child off, perhaps evades, the child loses that simple faith. He begins to wonder whether there are not some subjects about which it is perhaps improper to ask. He feels that there is something about them that embarrasses the parent. Moreover, he may begin to doubt whether the parent is wise and all-knowing.

Getting Down to Particulars

It is not curiosity that troubles us, but curiosities. The very parents who deplore "curiosity" in the abstract, when its concrete manifestations in the child annoy them, are frequently caught exchanging gossip or reading a newspaper. There is an area of human concern that we have kept veiled off. There is a field of discourse in which we have enjoined silence, but in which we have nevertheless spoken—although only in whispers, or furtively behind closed doors. It is here that we have discredited the desire to know, to understand; and it is here that we have stimulated curiosity, perhaps unduly, by means of the veils and the whispers.

Curiosity about the stars might be vain; but curiosity about sex has been considered morbid. Curiosity about chemicals might possibly be dangerous; but curiosity about what happens in the egg has been held certainly unwholesome. We are reminded that at the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago extra police were needed to hold the lines of eager spectators waiting to catch a glimpse of mounted and pickled human fœtuses arranged to show the stages of development; yet every well-equipped high school in the country can have such a show for incidental and casual study by its students, without creating any excitement whatever.

For the growing child our distinctions between curiosity meritorious and curiosity morbid are quite meaningless—to begin with. What he wants to know, he wants to know. He has no more sense of guilt when he asks about the external genitals than when he asks about the plumage of birds. Asking "Where do babies come from?" is to him no more morbid than asking "Where does the thunder come from?" That is, to begin with. But in too many cases the child learns: some questions it is proper to ask, even if futile; other questions it is not proper to ask, even if one is consumed by curiosity. And the child learns from the reactions of the adults. For the impropriety, the morbidity, the wickedness or sinfulness of questions resides not in the subject matter, not in the curiosity, not in the child, but in the assumptions and attitudes of the reacting adult.

When Herbert was six years old he was met on his return from school one day by his smiling and somewhat excited grandmother with the glad tidings, "You now have a little sister!" Herbert knew that a sister (or, as it might have been, a brother) was expected. His first words were, "Where is the cord?"

The grandmother was shocked as well as disappointed. She feared that the child's interests were morbid. He did not ask to see his mother or hope that she and the baby were doing well; he turned at once to an anatomical detail that was surely out of place in the mind of a normal and wholesome child. And it is possible that a child of six has no need for such details, that the interest was, if not exactly morbid, at least too highly specialized. It so happened that the same boy, several months later, was allowed one day to visit that same grandmother, who had been secluded for weeks because of a "heart attack." When he appeared in the grandmother's room after the long separation, he came with a thick book; and his first question was, "In which chamber of your heart did you have the pain, granny?" laying the open book before her to have her mark the exact spot on a diagram of the heart.*

Seeds in Fertile Soil

Again this cannot be considered morbid, if somewhat out of the ordinary. Yet at each stage the child's questions were legitimate and deserving of respect. They were legitimate because they were expressions of the child's groping, and we assume that it is better to know than not to know the nature of our world and of ourselves. Such questions are deserving of respect because they are the millions of seeds, of which most will probably perish without effect, but of which some will sprout into significant achievements.

The fears and uncertainties of parents when confronted with the child's questions lead to responses that are often unfortunate, for it is important both for the child and for the parent to keep up the simple question-answer relationship as long as possible. It

*Retold from *Our Children*, edited by Dorothy Canfield Fisher and Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, page 147.

is important for the child because, after all, he relies upon the parent for useful and reliable answers to his puzzles. It is important for the parent because, after all, the child reveals a great deal about his needs and difficulties and mental development through the questions that take form in his thought; and the parent should find it helpful to discover the child's interests, his misconceptions, his fears, his aspirations, as these disclose themselves through questions. It is unfortunate if this flow of communication between parent and child becomes interrupted early in the child's life—through the parent's fears, or misconceptions, or bigotry.

Parental Attitudes

THE parent's own problem when asked to elucidate the facts of life is not a simple choice of "to tell or not to tell." Shall he admit it, if he doesn't know the answer to a particular query? If he does know the answer, shall he "tell all" in the serene confidence that facts really answer such questions?

We cannot suddenly begin to acknowledge ignorance after having posed as an authority before our children for so long. We cannot suddenly acquire information which we had ourselves been taught to consider as somehow improper or unclean. We cannot suddenly put into words what had always been for us unspeakable, even if we know all the answers. We need not merely to acquaint ourselves adequately with the "facts of life," as the biologist or physiologist deals with them; we have to learn to accept them as facts, without fear or other emotional disturbance.

But increasingly children's questions will be directed toward meanings and values, as distinguished from "facts." This is so because the factual problems will, so to say, take care of themselves. Even if his parents remain silent, the child will learn more or less correctly, whether from school or from his playmates, from surreptitious reading or from implications in what he overhears. His interest moves steadily from mere fact toward the place of sex relationships in human affairs. Is it merely a means of reproduction? Is it separable as a source of pleasure from other relations we have with human beings, of the same as well as of the opposite sex? What are the rights and the wrongs in the management of sex impulses? Why must our preoccupation with the unmistakable lure of sex be deferred indefinitely? Is it merely a question of age or of economic independence?

The current news and community activities furnish endless occasion for curiosity on the one hand and casual guidance, if not indoctrination, on the other. Does a mutilation carry over to offspring? Why are triplets so rare among humans and so common among other mammals? Is the male always larger than the female? Dozens of questions arise, but only a few take shape, only a small fraction are uttered.

Other lines leading to the subject are laid down by the very common interest in the facts of heredity. Does heredity cross over? That is, is it true that boys resemble the mother more, and girls the father? There are questions about hair and stature, about talents and disposition. These questions cannot all be answered casually; but they ordinarily lead to discussions, in which people express their opinions.

There are the questions of population for example. People die; others are reported as having been born. There are also marriages, of people near and people far, for one reason or another of interest and noted or commented upon. The bride was so young—or so old. The man across the street at sixty-five married a girl under thirty. Widows remarry; also widowers. Divorced men and women remarry.

Interpreting the Facts

CASUAL comments on happenings that have to do with daily living often present opportunity for more significant instruction. Why is the relative age of the couple important? Because the two sexes mature and decline at different rates. A girl of twenty is ordinarily mature enough to marry a man several years older. If the marriage is at an earlier age, the two are likely to be closer together in age. Later in life, the male generally retains his sex interest and capacity longer; there is again an advantage if there is several years' difference in age between husband and wife. But such doctrine cannot be stated too seriously as dogma: there are differences among individuals; there are other factors to consider; if people really love each other the age difference is of minor importance. But the fact that the question is raised and discussed means that sex is being accepted, that it is not being denied, or looked at askance. And accepting it opens the way to further guidance.

We are likely to answer many of these larger questions without waiting to be asked. Our conduct in relation to numberless issues that arise, and our casual comments on what happens day by day would seem to tell children what we ourselves believe or desire. If the communication between parent and child is sufficiently easy, if the parent's reticence is not excessive, questions take increasingly the form of requests for explanation or interpretations. And as communication is easy, the casual comments of the

parent will fall upon the very questions the child is disposed to ask. This is exactly what happens in sincere conversation among adults: each participant draws out a reasonable share of whatever interests him. And in our converse with our children, the subject matter may seldom be "sex;" but it may at the same time seldom be very far from sex and its manifold ramifications in life.

Whether children ask explicit questions or not, parents, in spite of themselves, answer them. That is, we are unable to avoid impressing the children with our own attitudes toward the questions, even if we are unable to put into words what we actually feel or wish or fear. Since in one way or another reference to sex in its various aspects and bearings is constantly before us and before the children, our responses to the various kinds of situations produce their effects even when the adults are not aware of what is happening.

The existence of these attitudes is at the same time the source of difficulty which parents feel in dealing with the subject of sex before their children. It is these ancient fears and misgivings that make the subject unspeakable, and that make the silences alarming to the young. Obviously the first need is for the parents themselves to clarify their own objectives and to establish their own self-confidence. Obviously too, such change of heart cannot be achieved over night. This means that the task of sex education of children is primarily one of self-education of parents. But this self-education is something that has to be carried on hand in hand with the guidance of the children's development—it is education on the job, it cannot be undertaken and completed in advance of use, for the children are growing and changing and crying for help. It is necessary for the parent not only to acquire needed information but also to get his own bearings in the world. For until we can think of sex as something universal in its distribution throughout the world of life, and as comprehensive in its bearing upon all life processes, we are likely to confine our thinking to the personal references and to the emotions that we have ourselves developed in connection with sex. To be able to speak to the child objectively, we must first become sufficiently objective ourselves.

Reading Between the Lines

Children ask questions for other reasons as well as because they really want to know; and the reply which takes the question at its face value is often no answer at all.

CÉCILE PILPEL

THE generations of parents who believed that children should be seen and not heard made short shrift of children's questions. "Don't bother me," or "You wouldn't understand if I did tell you" were the accepted replies. I vividly remember a most revealing comment made by one of my own elders when a child asked something bright.

"Put him out," she said, "the next thing he says will be nonsense."

This was no doubt Spartan, but it also showed that her generation had perhaps as much insight as present-day parents who take every childish question at its face value. Attention-getting questions may then have had little chance to survive. But unsatisfied curiosity, provided it comes from real wanting-to-know, is not so easily squelched as latter day parents seem to think. It remains as a spur to pursuit of knowledge.

The importance placed upon children's questions is but one phase of a changing attitude toward children to which many things have contributed. The smaller family, increasing leisure, the stressing of the individuality of the human being, the "new freedom" in education have been fused into a feeling that everything a child does or says has supreme significance, and should command the full attention of the intelligent parent. So eager have we become in our attention to our children's questions that we drop whatever we may be doing, or interrupt our conversation at the first remark of a child, regardless of the possible value or importance that he himself may attach to it.

It is true, of course, that children need to be given our best help in finding their way about the world, and it is true they ask many questions which are not only valid but should command our interested

attention. But they ask other sorts of questions too. Parents cannot afford to be uncritical if they wish to give their children something more constructive than words. A child once described an inept teacher to her mother by saying, "She knows the words to everything but she doesn't *know* as much as you do when you don't *say* a thing."

Kinds of Questions

IT MAY help to try to analyze the questions a child asks, to see whether they are answerable; whether we may assume that the child is interested in an answer; whether he has found out that asking a question is the one surefire way of getting our sole and undivided attention; or whether these are cover-questions where a deep, perhaps unconscious, need is masked in what to the child seems more acceptable or conventional terms.

There are, of course, questions relating to immediate experiences of the child, queries stimulated by the child's increasing knowledge of life about him; and there are answers which he needs in order that he may better coordinate what he already knows. The purpose of all our best presentday teaching is to encourage and stimulate these interests in order that the child's desire *to know*—not merely to question—may progressively increase. Giving a verbal "reason why," no matter how explicit, as in the following incident, often blocks this desire.

When a mother refuses to buy a plant for her little daughter at the ten cent store because, "You know, dear, that plants won't grow in our steamheated rooms," she is withholding an answer as much as if she said, "Don't bother me!" Buying the plant, and advising the child of what is necessary to keep the plant alive, may be a way, not only of answering innumerable questions, but also of increasing the child's actual knowledge. And this is knowledge to which the child would bring interest because it was *she* who wanted the plant.

But all questions are not so specific; indeed one of the recognized characteristics of "childish questioning" is that much of it is unanswerable. Why should parents attempt the impossible? We lose sight of the fact that the little child, by the very fact of being small, feels insecure and must be helped to greater security. There are times when nothing will help him more than the parent's statement that he himself does not know the answer; or that this is a problem which is difficult even for grown-ups to understand; that there are some things which no one in the world knows all about yet, though they may know more some day.

If there are some questions we would do well to admit we cannot answer, there are others which children may not really want us to answer—or answer too much. Impressed with the belief that the questioning child is the bright child, we forget that just because these children are bright, they may ask questions to which the adult's answer, or attempt to answer, leads only to boredom. Such a child is as likely to refrain from voicing his queries if he is fed too much indigestible "knowledge" as if he were put off by "don't bother me." A thirteen-year-old girl asked her mother for some information, and was referred to her father who "knows so much more about that sort of thing." Having had similar experiences before, the girl replied, "But mother, I don't want to know *that* much."

There are other questions which seem to signify a need for communion, musings rather than a search for facts. Adults have the same need, though they may put their questionings differently. Children ask, "Who made people?" "Where does the sun go when it goes down?" "Where do people go when they die?" "Are there people who never die?" "Where does God live?" "Who made God?" "Does the world ever turn upside down? Then why don't people fall off?"

Stranger than Fiction

ONE perennial perplexity is the question of where babies come from. Because of his total inability to grasp these facts, the scientific explanation of growth and development in the mother's body must appear to a child of five far "fairier" than a fairy tale. Stories that have been told about where babies come from, including "the true one," will do more to hold the child's interest and satisfy him until his wider knowledge will fit the "true story" into place, than overemphasis on facts.

Children are primarily egotists. They are interested in themselves and in those things which directly affect them, rather than in abstractions. Some of these questions, depending on the child who puts them, may have personal implications. This is for the parent to discover. Usually they represent a casual fleeting interest which may be met rather by interesting stories about what people have thought about these matters than by any attempt to give a "scientific" answer. Children are patient and polite. They simulate interest long after they are quite lost in the words; whereas if we tell them the stories about what people have thought, they listen interestedly and gain at least a perspective of immemorial questings.

Sensing our keenness not to let one pearl of interest

escape, children very soon make capital of our breathless attention. The attention-getting question thus comes to be a special phenomenon of our own time. It becomes merely a process of sharpening wits in order to hold the parent illegitimately, because the child has discovered that the parent considers the asking of questions as the most legitimate of all childish pursuits.

Bids for Attention

Books that answer "Why does it rain?" "How is salt made?" all matters of fact, relevant and irrelevant, have come to the rescue of many conscientious parents. It may be a good trick to refer attention-getting children to such volumes. But since we are even more interested in freeing the child from the need of attention-getting devices, than in freeing the parent from his self-imposed burden of omniscience, even that recourse may be questioned.

We are familiar with the attention-needing child, though we are usually better able to recognize the situation if we happen to be one of the audience rather than one of the actors. Riding on a bus top in the very front seat, with an unobscured view of a city avenue, were a mother and a boy of about four. For several blocks the child was heavily engaged in listening to his mother read the "funnies." These he seemed to enjoy enormously. When she had finished with this, however, conversation began:

Child: "Why are there so many cars?"
Mother: "Because people have to go places."
Child: "Is that a car over there?"
Mother: "You know that's a car."
Child: "How many cars are there?"
Mother: "I don't know."
Child: "Is that car bigger than this one we're in?"
Mother: "No."
Child: "Is that other bus as big as this bus?"

This kind of questioning went on for quite awhile until with patience exhausted, the mother said, "Now, you'll have to stop."

The child was silent for at least two minutes, looking down at the busy street; then he began again, "There are two men there, aren't there?"

Mother: "Yes."
Child: "How much is two and two?"
Mother: "Four."
Child: "How much is four and four?"
Mother: "Eight."
Child: "How much is eight and eight?" and so on ad infinitum.

We would all recognize that this child's questionings rose wholly out of his need to keep contact with his mother and not out of a need to know. Riding on a bus top may mean a great variety of experiences to different four-year-olds. To one child it may be so overwhelming in noise, motion and kaleidoscopic views that he may revert actually or figuratively to sucking his thumb; to another, it may be so stimulating that the attempt to see and hear everything is exhausting and there is no energy left for questions. But where a mother resorts to reading the "funnies" to a child, as happened in this case, we can assume that she herself wishes to be and wants him to be oblivious of what is going on about him. If that is so, she must carry enough "funnies" or their equivalent to last through the trip. To the child, reading at such a moment can have no meaning except that he is getting the complete attention of his mother. What is more natural than for him to demand its continuance in some form? And what form works as well as "asking why?"

We must know our child, think in terms of what any given experience may mean to him, and attempt to make it happy and profitable to him, even though not a single question be asked.

"Why do I have to hang up my clothes?"
"Why do I have to go to bed so early?"
"Why do I have to go to school?"
"When will it be Saturday?"

All these—and endless others—have significance from the child's point of view, but do not necessarily come under fact-finding interests and therefore do not demand specific responses. What they call for is understanding that reads between the lines.

A six-year-old, for instance, leaves her bicycle in the middle of a narrow hallway. When asked to remove it, she asks "Why?" Do we have to go into a detailed discussion of the inconvenience this causes and of the "rights" of others to the use of the hallway, and so on, and so on? Or may we take for granted that this "why" expresses a natural and possibly momentary feeling of antagonism toward the person in authority? A friendly pat on the shoulder, a cheery "What a funny question," is probably all that is required, if all else in the child-parent relationship is sound.

Hidden Needs

But there are also what we may call cover-questions. Children have desires which they soon learn are unacceptable to those whose approval they most desire. Many of these refer to sex matters. A girl child may ask why she can't wear pants instead of skirts, when what she is really questioning is her female structure as against the male. If we go into

a long dissertation about customs, style, good taste, we have still not answered her question. Or a child may ask for minute explanations as to the act of procreation, when he is chiefly concerned about his father's and mother's relationships and needs assurance as to his place in their scheme of things. A child of eight asks, "Why is it that poor people have so many children and rich people have so few?" A good question, we say. But to answer it fully, we must answer its "unquestioned" as well as its overt implications.

These are also cover-questions that show emotional concern over matters far beyond even an intelligent child's intellectual needs or capacities. A nine-year-old, of a non-Jewish and non-radical family, who worries about Hitler, asks repeatedly if there is going to be a war and if America will be involved. Her father was involved in the World War. She is concerned about death and also insists that all her questionings remain a private matter between herself and her mother. Such questionings cannot be met by explanation and factual information. They probably represent a projection of personal insecurity transferred to what is accepted as legitimate impersonal inquiry. Questions such as these require psychiatric insight in order that the answer may meet the child's real need. Here, as in all expressions of childhood, we will find it necessary to know our child. What are his needs? Does he feel secure in his relation to his parents? Is he free from unnecessary domination? Is he suffering from a continuous sense of thwarting? It is only on the basis of such understanding that we shall be able to evaluate the child's questioning and give intelligent response. The honest return question, from parent to child, "How do *you* think this or that may possibly have happened or come to be?" often helps the child to clarify his thinking and possibly helps them both to a clearer understanding of what it is he wants to know.

A girl of five, whose parents had noticed that her second teeth were not coming in straight, had listened to many discussions between her parents and between them and the dentist. Finally she burst out, "Oh, can't you let me be how I grow?"

This is a helpful idea! In our endeavor to answer questions let us strive for greater awareness as to how our children grow, who they are and what they may need from us that they can't get for themselves, not only in the way of knowledge but also in deeper understanding.

Riding a Hobby at College

Antioch College attempts to develop a program which gives spontaneous interests room to grow, without "killing them with kindness."

WALTER KAHOE

IN his college years the student is usually introduced to a great number of new interests and is encouraged to develop habits of study and investigation. It is rather anomalous that with all these advantages he is rarely able deliberately to design his avocations and to follow them out as he might like.

In many ways he labors under peculiar difficulties. The requirements of his formal work are frequently so heavy that he has little energy or interest for voluntary investigation which requires intellectual effort. If he tries to continue interests formed earlier in life, he usually finds that he must pursue them at a higher level. Avocations on the college level require much more of design, definition and resources than do the same interests earlier in life, whether the hobby is collecting stamps or butterflies, or building airplane models. If a grammar school boy collects stamps he can do it on a relatively childish level and still be satisfied with his own efforts; but in college or afterwards, the same boy finds that he must devote a considerable amount of time and thought to it, and make it more of a science if he is to be satisfied. The boy who could derive a sense of validity from collecting a few butterflies must now become an entomologist in a serious way. He who could be satisfied with a few Indian arrow-heads must now become a first rate amateur archaeologist. The horizon must be pushed back farther and farther.

Colleges are just beginning to wake up to the pos-

sibility that in extra-curricular activities students frequently learn more than in many of their courses. Here more than any other place they learn to work together. They develop interests and resources which stay with them to enrich their lives long after they have forgotten much of the factual knowledge learned at college.

Even though the importance and significance of extra-curricular activities is recognized, to many people it seems like rushing in where angles fear to tread to attempt to organize and discipline activities which derive their chief value from being spontaneous and unorganized. Perhaps this is a valid viewpoint. It may be that much of the value of hobbies disappears as they become organized; on the other hand some definite policy may prove fruitful.

Every Man to His Taste

Antioch College has a small student body, in normal times about 600 students. For the most part they are rather persistent hobbyists. Activities now being eagerly carried on include various student publications, a campus improvement club, community government, intramural athletics, a political discussion club, a radio club, a religious discussion circle, a camera club, a number of musical organizations, a flourishing dramatic club and various groups such as the student civil engineer chapter. Although we realize the danger of doing too much, we are at present trying to map out some sort of a program which will recognize these activities as an integral part of the college life. For example, at most colleges a student must take time from the work for which he came to college if he is to devote energy to an avocation. Perhaps we can devise some system under which a student who elects an interest may substitute it for a formal course. It is possible that there may be as much cultural value in eagerly investigating the home life of the mound-builders as in wearily grinding through a course in "x-ology" elected merely because it carries a certain number of credits. It may be possible to have faculty sponsors give a certain continuity to student effort in various fields, and to consider this faculty effort as part of the teaching load rather than as something which the instructor can do only by neglecting his teaching or by using up all his own leisure. Certainly a greater correlation is possible between hobbies and courses. For example, a course in biology might enrich any number of avocational interests. A really scientific study of tropical fish may prove a more amusing hobby than a goldfish bowl with a couple of guppies. Aesthetics in particular furnishes motivation for many avocations such as woodcarving, ceramics, music and book-making.

If such an extra-curricular program is to have any meaning, we must have from the very beginning a picture of that whole at which we are aiming. This would include: participation of faculty members, not as teachers or controllers but as companions and as a semi-permanent nucleus for the group; groups large enough and varied enough so that no student will have to select a hobby merely because of its availability and not because of genuine interest. In our experience people in general very seldom design or deliberately select those fields in which they would like to spend their efforts. Hobbies are more likely to be rather random following of the line of least resistance. One will go in for dramatics because a friend is doing so or because it happens to be in fashion. Another goes hiking because other people do. If a hobbies program is to mean anything there must be a wide enough range of choice so that more satisfying choices are possible. It would perhaps represent greater wisdom to select deliberately some hobby which could be continued after college years and after severance from the group.

Making Room for Leisure Interests

The picture outlined is not yet a fact but gradually we are working toward it and we hope that within a few years fact and theory will coincide. This theoretical platform is open, of course, to the objection that by extending formal recognition to extra-curricular work we are not only attempting to organize that which derives its chief value from being unorganized but are offering the student a bribe to do that which he should do spontaneously. The objection is probably valid. But I suspect that if we recognize the problem we shall have established a healthier state than our present one where studies and interests are on different levels and compete for the student's time and energy.

The student should have some voice in the selection of the field in which he is to labor, and in that selection he should not be penalized for occasionally doing something that he really wants to do. This does not discard "required courses;" rather it supplements them. In adding to the range of student choice and increasing the number of subjects which may be pursued, with some formal recognition in the way of credits, we hope to broaden rather than to cheapen college work. We hope to bring into classroom work some of that spontaneous and effortless interest which for many of us is the chief charm and value of our hobby-riding.

Parents' Questions and Discussion

These pages, based on the foregoing articles, are presented for the use of individuals or of groups having this topic on their regular programs. Questions and discussion are taken from study group records.

STUDY GROUP DEPARTMENT

CÉCILE PILPEL, Director — JOSETTE FRANK, Editor

When a child of five pulls apart toys and household articles can this destructiveness be attributed to curiosity? How shall it be handled?

Very often this kind of destruction indicates the child's urge to manipulate, a desire to do something with the things at hand. Where this is the case the situation is easily met by giving him the kind of materials that lend themselves to that purpose without destroying those things which have other uses. Sometimes, in older children, destruction of articles may be traced to a spirit of inquiry—the desire to see "what makes it go." But usually by the time the child is five or six, he knows fairly well what purpose things serve and is happy in putting them to their proper uses. Where we find destruction which does not appear to be traceable to these developmental needs, we must look for other possible motivations. It may be a need to "get even" with someone or a resistance to the pressure of authority. It may derive from a covered jealousy or express a release from a sense of continued thwarting. An understanding of the motivation will suggest and give direction to helpful procedure.

What should a mother do when her child asks questions which are embarrassing to her because of the time or place, or the situation at the moment?

The little child who has learned to talk freely of matters relating to sex and reproduction does not sense the fact that there are times and places when one does not discuss these matters. This child however, knowing that his valid questions are usually respected and answered, is ready to accept a deferred answer: "We'll discuss that some other time."

If children as they grow older have learned the common proprieties with respect to times and places, tactful behavior, conduct in public places and in groups of people, they will know that one does not interrupt with any kind of extraneous questions when adults are conversing together; that personal matters are not subjects for discussion unless the others concerned are willing to make them public. Surely this is as important in his education as are the answers to his questions. Where a child with such training still feels impelled to flaunt his questions at inopportune moments, one must look for other motivations of which this may be but the overt expression.

A very intelligent child of six asks many questions about scientific matters on which his mother is not sufficiently informed to answer. He is too young to use an encyclopedia himself. How can his demands be met by a mother too busy for research?

If the questions asked are all along one general trend of interest one might find some good book on this subject to read to him as one reads him story-books. If they cover too wide a range to make this possible one might suggest that he take his questions to some teacher in school who may be better equipped than the parent with the wanted information. A pictured encyclopedia—if the home can afford one—may be helpful for such a child, even before he can read the text. Again, some of these questions may offer a valuable opportunity, if the mother is at all interested in some of the subjects, for a joint enterprise which will make for a good rapport between mother and child. However, some of this boy's questions may remain for the present unanswered—as many of our own must—to wait until such time as he is able to go to source material himself. If his interest is genuine, not just manufactured to win adult applause or attention, then it will survive and the questions will recur later, when he is better equipped than he is now to use the information.

How shall we treat the type of questions which are obviously attention-getting devices? Should we answer them?

To answer all of the questions in such situations is obviously impossible. To ignore them is equally impossible. Usually, however, one can discover the source of the child's need for continuous attention, and that is the point upon which to focus. By meeting the child's need, whether for affection or for security, on a more helpful level, we can materially reduce the amount of "asking" of this nature. We can interest him in something to do—something which would of itself be question-answering. Here he would still have the attention of the adult, but this attention could then be transferred skillfully to the activity itself. Gradually, as the child finds satisfactions in these experiences, he will come to derive part of his needed security from his own personal achievement rather than purely from adult attention.

When a child up to the age of seven asks very few questions, is this an indication that he is lacking in general alertness and intelligence?

This is possible, of course; but by the age of seven any such lacks would also have become apparent in other ways, such as in school work and general mental activity. If there is no other indication that the child lacks intellectual interest, then the absence of questions may have several explanations: The child may have learned very early that questions were not welcomed by the adults in his environment, or at best were not answered to his satisfaction. Possibly his particular interests are those with which his environment has small sympathy—and he has sensed this. Or perhaps he is the type of child who is more interested in the *how* of things than in the *why*, and who to a large extent answers his own questionings by *doing* so that he has little need for *inquiring*. In the latter case one need not be concerned. But if the absence of questions is due to emotional difficulties it would be wise to try to establish a more sympathetic relationship between the child and the adults closest to him, not only to free his childish questioning, but also to make it possible for him to come more confidently to the adult with later problems that may beset him.

A girl of nine who has heard of the menstrual process is asking a great many questions about it. She has never before asked any questions about sex matters. Is this normal?

The pre-pubertal period is normally a time for a renewed interest in sexual matters, and it is therefore not strange that this child should be asking questions now. That she has not, at a much earlier age, asked any questions pertaining to sex and reproduction may, perhaps, point to some repression of this type of question due to her previous experience with adults. Significant in this respect is the fact that her questions now center upon the matter of menstruation. These are possibly merely cover-questions for other things she would like to know and dares not ask. She knows that menstruation is a permissible subject of inquiry, though it may be the least interesting of all the "mysteries" to which she desires access. By all means we must inform her of the facts concerning menstruation, and allay any possible emotional concern. But we must at the same time make certain that the possibly masked questionings are fully and satisfactorily answered.

A girl of ten asks persistent questions about morbid subjects such as accidents, deaths, public calamities, in all their details. Does this indicate an undue morbid curiosity? Should these questions be answered?

To know whether this is a matter for concern one must take into account the total personality picture which the child presents. Is she seemingly well adjusted, developing normally, sleeping and eating well, free from night terrors or specific fear, active and interested in the pursuits suitable for her age? Has she good rapport with persons and things in her environment? If so, we can afford to ignore the matter, or, without dwelling at length, give the child whatever factual information she asks for.

If, however, we see the morbid tendency combined with emotional instability and maladjustment and realize that the child is bringing upon herself more nervous excitement than she can stand, we have a different situation. In this case we may wish to "soft pedal" the morbid interests and make the fundamental maladjustments the real point of attack. Like all problems of emotional instability these may range in severity from problems which a parent can handle himself to those which require the aid of a psychiatrist.

On the whole, "morbid interests" are a phase of normal childhood and are often not as hard for the child to bear as for the adult.

A boy's eager pursuit of information on scientific subjects since early childhood has pointed to a strong interest in that direction. Now, in his first year at college, this interest has died out and he no longer plans to specialize along those lines. Should he be urged to do so?

Several explanations for this change suggest themselves. It is possible that the boy's in-

terest was never very deep or very real but had been encouraged beyond its natural limits by the approval with which his early "scientific" curiosity had been fostered by his parents or other adults. If this is the case then he is fortunate, indeed, to have been released from this pressure.

His interest in science may, however, be a very real one, but submerged for a time by the widening of horizons and the opening of new fields of thought which college offers. It is natural that at this point he should want to explore in many new directions, now that the opportunity presents. Or, on the other hand, the content of freshman science courses may seem elementary in comparison with what he already knows; perhaps he is bored by going over familiar ground. In this case he can well afford to wait until the interest reasserts itself later, when more challenging courses of study become available.

Vocational tests might prove helpful, at this point, to determine whether or not the boy's abilities follow this line of interest sufficiently to warrant specialization toward a vocational choice. The college psychologist or another professional consultant will be able to advise in this regard.

STUDY OUTLINE: CURIOSITY

TOPICAL OUTLINE

1. THE CHILD'S QUESTIONS

   Are they:
   - indications of intelligent interest in world and people?
   - merely a form of conversation?
   - attention-getting devices?
   - "stalling" devices, to avoid compliance with request or command?
   - "cover questions"?

2. THE ADOLESCENT'S QUESTIONS

   Do they indicate:
   - search for factual material?
   - substitutes for individual research or reading?
   - outlets for repressed emotional needs and interests?

3. NORMAL VS. MORBID CURIOSITY

   Classification depends upon:
   - individual nature of child
   - emotional needs of child
   - age and mental capacity
   - opportunities for legitimate satisfaction of curiosity

4. PARENTAL ATTITUDE TOWARD CURIOSITY

   How questions are answered depends on:
   - ability to interpret questions
   - recognition of child's real need
   - technique for giving answers or guiding child in search for information
   - freedom from inhibitions which make answering difficult
   - freedom from self-imposed pressure to answer every question in detail

PROBLEMS

1. How can the mother of a four-year-old distinguish between a real thirst for knowledge and questions that are merely conversational devices or bids for attention?

2. Is it ever permissible or even desirable to defer an answer? To refuse it? Illustrate.

3. A five-year-old asks one question after another, scarcely listening to replies. He is most insistent when his mother is occupied with reading or visitors. Should his questions be answered conscientiously, in the hope that he will eventually be satisfied? Are there other ways of dealing with this problem?

4. A group of four- to six-year-old children were discovered in an unoccupied garage investigating each other's bodies. One parent considered this the influence of a single perverted child. Another looked upon it as the normal curiosity of small children. What other possible interpretations are there and how would you deal with the problem?

5. A fourteen-year-old boy asked his mother whether most women realize the dangers of pregnancy and child birth. Would you call this a simple question deserving a factual answer? A morbid question? A "leading" question, indicating the child's need for much more detailed clarification? How would you deal with it on the basis of your classification?

REFERENCE READING

The Activities Curriculum in the Primary Grades
By Marion Paine Stevens. *Heath.* 440 *pp.* 1931

Before Books
By Caroline Pratt and Jessie Stanton. *Greenberg.* 349 *pp.* 1926

The Development of Learning in Young Children
By Lovisa Catharine Wagoner. *McGraw-Hill.* 336 *pp.* 1933

Difficulties in Child Development
By Mary Chadwick. *Day.* 411 *pp.* 1923

The Education of the Whole Man
By L. P. Jacks. *Harper.* 155 *pp.* 1931

Edward and Marigold
By Marjorie Thorburn. *Allen and Unwin.* 230 *pp.* 1933

Parents and Sex Education
By Benjamin C. Gruenberg. *Viking.* 112 *pp.* 1932

Books of the Year For Children

MRS. HUGH GRANT STRAUS, Chairman, Children's Book Committee

This list has been selected and arranged by the Children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association. The age grouping is in no sense intended to restrict choice, and parents are urged to study the whole list since many books have a far wider appeal than could be indicated. The selections also consider a broad range of reading interest and a variety of individual tastes.

A more comprehensive list of the year's books is available in pamphlet form at ten cents a copy. The volumes listed will be on exhibit at the headquarters of the Association beginning December 6th.

For the Youngest

Ages Two, Three and Four

***The A B C Bunny (32 pages) $2.00**
by Wanda Ga'g — Coward-McCann
Picture, rhyme and song skillfully blended in a fine alphabet book of rare artistry and charm.

Bobbie and Donnie Were Twins (40 pages) $1.00
by Esther Brann — The Macmillan Co.
A very little story, for very little folk, about the everyday things children love. Appropriate illustrations by the author.

The Happy Hen (32 pages) $1.00
by Helen and Alf Evers — Farrar & Rinehart
A picture book with an amusing little story of a brown hen who is glad to stay at home.

Nursery Tales Children Love (76 pages).....$1.00
edited by Watty Piper — The Platt & Munk Co.
Collecting in one inexpensive volume eight of the most loved "classics"—"The Tale of Peter Rabbit," "Little Black Sambo," "The Gingerbread Boy," "Chicken Little," and others.

Father Gander (210 pages) $2.00
by Ilo Orleans — Claude Kendall
Each day in the year, in engaging little rhymes about familiar doings, accompanied by child-like drawings.

Ages Five, Six and Seven

***Told Under the Blue Umbrella (161 pages) $2.00**
selected by the Literature Committee of the Association for Childhood Education — The Macmillan Co.
A treasure trove of tales for young listeners, reprinting the best of the newer stories sure to become "old favorites." An asset in any child's library.

Amelia ranne and the Magic Ring (60 pages) $1.00
by Eleanor Farjeon — David McKay Co.
This energetic little heroine of the Stiggins family has another adventure in helpfulness. Profusely illustrated by Susan Beatrice Pearse.

Snipp, Snapp, Snurr and the Magic Horse (24 pages) $1.00
by Maj Lindman — Albert Whitman & Co.
About three little boys who go to Candy Land on their rocking horse; with happy illustrations by the author.

Blue Barns (44 pages) $1.75
by Helen Sewell — The Macmillan Co.
Beautiful pictures by the artist-author lend charm to a pleasant story in which a fatherly gander guides seven motherless ducklings around the farm.

***Ola and Blakken (36 pages) $1.75**
by Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire — Doubleday, Doran & Co.
An artistic book of phantasy and folk tale from far-off Norway. The story is blended with rare and colorful pictures with a modern flavor.

Powder (30 pages) $2.00
by Esther Averill and Lila Stanley — Harrison Smith & Robert Haas
Colorful and decorative pictures in a slight story of a white colt, a bad-tempered duchess and a circus.

***The Story About Ping (32 pages) $1.00**
by Marjorie Flack — The Viking Press
A picture-story of a little yellow duckling who gets lost from his mother, father, two sisters, three brothers, eleven aunts, seven uncles and forty-two cousins on the Yangtze River, and happily finds them again. Fine colored lithographs by Kurt Wiese.

Junket Is Nice (64 pages) $1.00
by Dorothy Kunhardt — Harcourt, Brace & Co.
A nonsense picture-story, replete with those absurdities and exaggerations that appeal to most children. A jolly book to read aloud.

The Second Picture Book of Animals (120 pages)....$2.50
The Macmillan Co.
Familiar and domestic animals in artistic photographs.

The "Pop-up" Mickey Mouse (28 pages).....$ .85
The "Pop-up" Minnie Mouse (28 pages).....$ .85
by Walt Disney Studios — Blue Ribbon Books
These cartoon characters, dear to children, have amusing adventures in two well told stories. The "pop-up" pictures contribute to the fun.

* *Of outstanding interest and quality.*

***The Story of Babar (48 pages)** $3.00
by Jean de Brunhoff; translated by Merle Haas
Harrison Smith & Robert Haas
A perfect nonsense tale from France, sophisticated yet child-like, all about the experiences of a youthful elephant in the jungle and in the city. Humorously illustrated in gay color by the author.

***Get-a-Way and Háry János (62 pages)** $2.00
by Maud and Miska Petersham The Viking Press
Hungarian toys come to life in a gay tale of many fantastic adventures. Spirited illustrations in color make this picture-story an unusual achievement.

For the Elementary Years

Ages Seven, Eight and Nine

The Fairy Alphabet as Used by Merlin (64 pages)....$1.50
by Elizabeth MacKinstry The Viking Press
In these twenty-six truly elfin pictures with verse, a distinguished artist weaves a spell of enchantment for young and old.

Cat's Cradles for His Majesty (120 pages) $2.00
by Margaret and Mary Baker Duffield & Green
Engaging silhouettes add interest to the gentle nonsense-story of a widow, her son and their cat who go adventuring.

The Hurdy-Gurdy Man (56 pages) .....$ .75
by Margery Williams Bianco Oxford University Press
A charming and diverting little tale from England about a hurdy-gurdy man and his monkey. Originally and delightfully illustrated by Robert Lawson.

***The Handsome Donkey (67 pages)** $1.75
by Mary Gould Davis Harcourt, Brace & Co.
A skillfully told story of a proud and selfish donkey who unexpectedly turns hero. The background is a charming glimpse of Italy. Effectively illustrated by Emma Brock.

Broomstick and Snowflake (88 pages) $1.75
by Johan Falkberget; translated by Tekla Welhaven
The Macmillan Co.
Norwegian folk tales of gnomes, trolls and giants. The simple humor of their peasant origin is retained in the spirited illustrations by Helen Sewell.

Doctor Dolittle's Return (273 pages) $2.00
by Hugh Lofting Frederick A. Stokes Co.
The quaint old doctor and his animals, long dear to children, reappear in a story told with humor and lovable make-believe.

The Wind in the Willows (312 pages) (new edition) $1.00
by Kenneth Grahame Charles Scribner's Sons
This classic of whimsical animal adventure is given new life by the inimitable illustrations of E. H. Shepard.

***Mr. M'Tavish (110 pages)** $1.00
by Marion Bullard E. P. Dutton & Co.
An appealing dog story in which the growing up of a Scottie puppy is depicted with understanding. Excellently illustrated by the author.

Stumpy (147 pages) $2.00
by Frank B. Linderman The John Day Co.
The autobiography of a chipmunk, written by a lover of the woodland and its creatures. Well illustrated by H. M. Stoops.

***Spunky (90 pages)** $2.00
by Berta and Elmer Hader The Macmillan Co.
Spunky, a Shetland pony, works in a coal mine, travels by rail and ship, is trained for a circus, plays vagabond with a peddler, gives rides to children in the park and finally comes back to his beloved master in this happy story. Strikingly illustrated.

Just Across the Street (109 pages) $1.50
by Rachel Field The Macmillan Co.
The adventures of two little neighbors, described with all the realistic and delightful detail of life on a city block.

***Where is Adelaide? (155 pages)** $1.75
by Eliza Orne White Houghton Mifflin Co.
A pleasant story with a homey flavor, about a little orphan girl who proves to be a "handful" to her adopted family. Excellent format, enhanced by the charming illustrations of Helen Sewell.

***Jack and Matt of the W X (132 pages)** $2.00
by Kathryne Van Noy and Elinor Hedrick Duffield & Green
Two real little boys go ranching, get lost in the woods, explore a cave, learn to sheer sheep, brand cattle and camp out, and last but not least, forget to brush their teeth. Illustrated with photographs.

***Farmer Boy (230 pages)** $2.00
by Laura Ingalls Wilder Harper & Bros.
Intimate and homely incidents of a family's life on a New York farm sixty years ago, told with a vividness and personal touch that will appeal to the nine-year-old of today. Charming illustrations by Helen Sewell.

My Boys (186 pages) $2.00
by Gustav af Geijerstam; translated by Alfhild Huebsch
The Viking Press
A seaside village is the background for the gay adventures of two Swedish boys on summer vacation. A good translation with characteristic and animated drawings by Karl Larsson.

***Fortune's Caravan (120 pages)** $1.75
by Lily Jean-Javal; adapted by Rachel Field from the translation by Marion Saunders William Morrow & Co.
A provincial French family turns misfortune into fortune by means of a gay adventurous traveling circus. Effective illustrations by Maggie Salcedo in black and white and in color add to the humor and charm of the story.

***One Day with Manu (34 pages)** $2.00
by Armstrong Sperry The John C. Winston Co.
A particularly beautiful and entertaining book telling of a small native boy's day on a South Sea Island. Illustrated by the author.

The Little White Goat (58 pages) $1.75
by Dorothy P. Lathrop The Macmillan Co.
A dainty phantasy, in which two children join the play of the shy wild creatures of the forest. Exquisitely illustrated by the author, for the imaginative child.

Japanese Holiday Picture Tales (161 pages).....$1.50
by Chiyono Sugimoto Frederick A. Stokes Co.
Folk tales combined with modern Japanese home life in a series of stories for every month in the year. The illustrations by Tekisui Ishii are rare achievements.

***Andersen's Fairy Tales (255 pages)** $2.50
illustrated by Elizabeth MacKinstry Coward-McCann
A beautiful edition of fifteen of the better known tales from Andersen, retold and illustrated with rare beauty.

***The Arthur Rackham Fairy Book (287 pages)**.....$2.50
J. B. Lippincott Co.
A treasure trove of beloved tales selected from the master-writers of folklore, with a distinguished artist's characteristic and exquisite illustrations.

***The Conquest of the Atlantic (55 pages)** $2.50
by Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire The Viking Press
Dramatic and strangely beautiful lithographs in color and in black and white, are combined with a swift narrative to make an absorbing cross-section of historic exploration and daring.

For the Intermediate Years

Ages Ten, Eleven and Twelve

***The Rusted Knight and Other Stories (135 pages)....$2.00**
by Richard von Volkmann; translated by William Kelly Prentice — Bruce Humphries
An unusual collection of little known fairy tales from the German, told with wit and beauty. Charmingly illustrated in silhouette by Marte Landsberger.

The Big Tree of Bunlahy (166 pages) $2.25
by Padraic Colum — The Macmillan Co.
Imaginative Irish folk tales with fine poetic quality. Interesting illustrations with native atmosphere.

The Story of Beowulf (84 pages) $2.50
told by Strafford Riggs — D. Appleton-Century Co.
A great legendary hero of the Northland, portrayed for young readers in a valorous tale of dragon-fighting, black magic and gory adventure. Striking decorations by Henry C. Pitz.

Turquoise Boy and White Shell Girl (202 pages)....$1.75
by Eda Lou Walton — Thomas Y. Crowell Co.
An informative story of two Navajo children, telling in a most sympathetic way the history, legends and present life of the tribe, including the school experiences of the children.

Dark Circle of Branches (212 pages) $2.50
by Laura Adams Armer — Longmans, Green & Co.
A beautiful tale of Navaho life today, and of the myths and legends of this ancient people, for the child especially interested in and with an appreciation of rare poetic writing. Pictures of fine quality by Sidney Armer.

***Cowboy Holiday (219 pages).....$1.75**
by Helen Train Hilles — The Macmillan Co.
The experiences of an Eastern family, vacationing on a dude ranch, provide interesting and very pleasant reading.

Ann's Surprising Summer (199 pages) $1.75
by Marjorie Hill Allee — Houghton Mifflin Co.
Ann and her family, in a shack on the shore of Lake Michigan, have an interesting time with zoological specimens, as well as some excitement with a bootlegging neighbor.

Road to Adventure $1.75
by Mary Grant Bruce — Minton, Balch & Co.
A good picture of life in an Australian circus seen through the eyes of a boy of nine.

***A Norwegian Farm (343 pages) $2.00**
by Marie Hamsun; translated by Maida Castelhun Darnton — J. B. Lippincott Co.
A story of simple, hearty life in which the pranks of four very real children are recounted with humor and sympathy. Characteristic illustrations by Elsa Jemne.

Giff and Stiff in the South Seas (241 pages) $2.00
by Gifford Bryce Pinchot — The John C. Winston Co.
The actual experiences of a boy and his chum with a scientific expedition; full of interest and information gleaned from deep seas and far-off lands. Readable and well illustrated with photographs.

***The Desert Island Adventure Book (174 pages) $1.90**
edited by John Grove — The Macmillan Co.
True adventures of famous castaways told in thrilling short stories of hazards, resourcefulness, courage and endurance. A perfect book for the adventure-lover.

Triple Threat (278 pages) $1.75
by Donal Hamilton Haines — Farrar & Rinehart
A really good school story, with excellent characterization and incident. A welcome book.

Peter: Katrinka's Brother (416 pages) $2.00
by Helen Eggleston Haskell — E. P. Dutton & Co.
A youthful novel of the transition period in Russia, reflecting the kaleidoscopic panorama of change.

"Seek There" (194 pages) $2.50
by Eleanor Helme and Nance Paul — Charles Scribner's Sons
A Scotch manor, long buried heirlooms, two very real children, their aunt, a neighborly man-friend and a villain, are woven into an excellent story of hidden treasure. Beautifully illustrated by Frank Wallace.

***Sleepy Black (250 pages) $2.50**
by Ross Santee — Farrar & Rinehart
More than "just another horse story." The range, the rodeo, horse stealing, the bull ring are woven into a tale often moving and told with sympathy. Pen and ink drawings by the author.

Swords of Steel (262 pages) $2.00
by Elsie Singmaster — Houghton Mifflin Co.
A boy's experiences in the Gettysburg country during the troubled times preceding and during the Civil War. A vivid and well told story.

For the High School Age

Thirteen and Over

Seldom and the Golden Cheese (160 pages) $2.00
by Joseph Schrank — Dodd, Mead & Co.
A fantastic tale, full of penetrating humor and subtle satire, in which young Seldom adventures in quest of gold to satisfy his greedy elders. For the sophisticated young reader.

What-o'Clock Tales (225 pages) $2.00
by Laurence Housman — Frederick A. Stokes Co.
Short tales of phantasy with a weird and mystical flavor. For the more mature reader with special tastes and a feeling for literary quality.

New Land (317 pages) $2.00
by Sarah Lindsay Schmidt — Robert M. McBride & Co.
Homesteading today in a brave story of seventeen-year-old twins, brother and sister, who with their father struggle to achieve a home in Wyoming.

Treasures of Darkness (288 pages) $1.75
by Carl H. Claudy — Doubleday, Doran & Co.
At last a first-rate mystery story for boys and girls with characters that come alive, a rapid, exciting plot and a real surprise for a climax.

***Amarantha Gay, M. D. (158 pages) $2.00**
by Emma Gelders Sterne — Duffield & Green
A Southern girl of 1876 attains a New England college and a career, and achieves romance in a story that reflects the color and spirit of her times.

Captain D'Artagnan (311 pages).....$2.00
by Lucien Pemjean; translated by Madeleine Boyd and Robert Molloy — Doubleday, Doran & Co.
Swashbuckling adventure in a historical setting of Seventeenth Century France, following more closely than Dumas the actual life of the gallant swordsman. Rapid and well written.

A Loyal Foe (260 pages) $2.00
by Ivy Bolton — Longmans, Green & Co.
A swift moving romance of high adventure in England at the time of the Wars of the Roses.

Kirdy (276 pages).....$2.00
by Harold Lamb — Doubleday, Doran & Co.
An exciting tale of Cossack warfare and adventure, of cruelty and romance, in the dark epoch of Seventeenth Century Russia.

Stone Knife Boy (270 pages) $2.00
by Alida Sims Malkus — Harcourt, Brace & Co.
An absorbing tale, told with real insight into Pueblo character and customs, in which a Taos youth tracks down cattle thieves and is honored by Whites and Indians alike.

The Half Deck (316 pages) $2.00
by George H. Grant — Little, Brown & Co.
Two exciting and colorful years as a cadet on a freighter, described by an English captain in an engrossing chronicle.

***Glory of the Seas (315 pages)** $2.00
by Agnes Danforth Hewes — Alfred A. Knopf
A dramatic and absorbing story of Boston during the great clipper ship days, when the race to California for gold began, and fugitive slaves were creating tense feeling between North and South.

***The Bird of Dawning (310 pages)** $2.50
by John Masefield — The Macmillan Co.
A novel of the sea, of the tea race home from China, of shipwreck and daring and triumph. Written by a master of this kind of narrative.

Warpath and Cattle Trail (296 pages) $1.50
by Hubert E. Collins — William Morrow & Co.
A convincing, fascinating tale of cowboys and Indians on the famous Chisholm Trail, in a vivid picture of frontier life.

The Enchanted Jungle (310 pages) $2.50
by Isadore Lhevinne — Coward-McCann
A young American musician visits the Peruvian jungles and has many strange adventures among the head-hunters, which are told in a readable story.

***Digging in the Southwest (301 pages)** $2.50
by Ann Axtell Morris — Doubleday, Doran & Co.
An informal but informational book that makes archeological digging in the Southwest not merely a scientific undertaking but a thrilling personal adventure.

The Forest of Adventure (258 pages) $2.50
by Raymond L. Ditmars — The Macmillan Co.
The problems and dangers of scientific exploration in the South American tropics, capturing rare wild life for study, described by a distinguished naturalist. For the mature young reader.

Jack's House (258 pages) $2.00
by Lincoln Fay Robinson — The Viking Press
Personal recollections of a boy of today through which we glimpse a fine character as he translates his ideals into an active life.

***Julia Newberry's Diary (176 pages)** $2.50
with introduction by Margaret Ayer Barnes and Janet Ayer Fairbank — W. W. Norton & Co.
The life of a young American girl in 1870, which gives an authentic portrait both of a girl and an epoch that will today interest girls of fifteen and adults as well.

***The Boys' Life of Thomas Jefferson (360 pages)** $2.50
by Helen Nicolay — D. Appleton-Century Co.
A competent and human biography of a great American, written in a way that makes vivid both the man and his times.

Off to Arcady (503 pages) $1.00
edited by Max J. Herzberg — American Book Co.
An anthology containing a wide selection of poetry with an excellent introduction and a section of seldom recorded verse from the American Indian.

***Aesop's Fables (86 pages)** $2.00
edited and illustrated by Boris Artzybasheff — The Viking Press
Dramatic and striking illustrations in a new rendering of Aesop by a distinguished artist-author. A joy to the connoisseur.

***Kings and Queens (79 pages)** $2.00
***Heroes and Heroines (79 pages)** $2.50
by Eleanor and Herbert Farjeon — E. P. Dutton & Co.
Two books of amusing verse descriptions, one of the rulers of England, the other of a sprinkling of the great and not so great of all times and places; copiously illustrated with humorous pictures by Rosalind Thornycroft, in the manner of old prints.

***A Book of Americans (114 pages)** $2.00
by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benét — Farrar & Rinehart
Lusty ballad and poignant poetry of a high order portray colorful characters with sparkling wit and rare insight. Vigorous illustrations by Charles Child. Fine reading aloud for a wide age range.

For Special Interests

***The Train Book (106 pages)** $1.00
by William Clayton Pryor — Harcourt, Brace & Co.
A book of unusual photographs, with informative and entertaining text, sure of a hearty response from the transportation-minded six-year-old.

America Travels (121 pages) $2.00
by Alice Dalgliesh — The Macmillan Co.
Eight stories of journeys by stage coach, sailing vessel, canal boat, covered wagon, motor, steam and plane, plus a chronicle of travel in America during the last hundred years, excellently illustrated by Hildegarde Woodward. 7 to 10.

***Skyscraper (80 pages)** $2.00
by Elsa H. Naumburg, Clara Lambert and Lucy Sprague Mitchell — The John Day Co.
The making of a skyscraper, its planning, foundations and lofty rearing, dramatically depicted in fine photographs, verse and explanatory text. 8 and over.

Man's Long Climb (154 pages) $1.75
by Marion Florence Lansing — Little, Brown & Co.
Man's use of clay, metal, the wheel, writing and other common-places important in the development of civilization, simple but not undignified for the child 7 to 9.

***All the Ways of Building (304 pages)** $3.50
by L. Lamprey — The Macmillan Co.
The hows and whys of man's architectural development through the ages, from caveman's shelter to steel skyscraper. Well selected material, interestingly presented and amply illustrated. 10 and over.

The Story of Aircraft (510 pages) $2.50
by Chelsea Fraser — Thomas Y. Crowell Co.
Aviation from its early mythical beginnings to its triumphant realization of today. Anecdote and scientific information are included in a well organized and readable account. 11 and over.

***The Farm in Pictures (92 pages)** $1.00
by John Y. Beaty and J. C. Allen — The Saalfield Pub. Co.
Modern processes on the farm, in clear and interesting text, with many excellent photographs. A welcome and needed book for children over 8.

(*Continued on page* 92)

News and Notes

THROUGHOUT the years the Child Study Association has been particularly fortunate in having the support and active cooperation of many leaders whose work in related fields has brought them into close touch with parent education. Today, as in the past, the members of the Board of Directors and of the Advisory Board form a bulwark of experienced advice and active cooperation.

New Board Members

The Association takes great pleasure in welcoming the following new members to its "official family:"

To the Board of Directors: Mrs. Dorothy Canfield Fisher, President of the American Association for Adult Education, author of "Mothers and Children," and of "The Deepening Stream," "Bonfire" and many other novels, and co-editor of "Our Children: A Handbook for Parents;" and Mrs. Haviland Smith, formerly with the Spelman Fund and the International Relations Committee of the American Association of University Women, and now actively assisting in the Study Group and Committee work of the Association.

To the Advisory Board: Frederic H. Bartlett, M.D., Director of Pediatric Service, Fifth Avenue Hospital, New York; Willard W. Beatty, Superintendent of Schools, Bronxville, N. Y. and President of the Progressive Education Association; Mr. and Mrs. Leonard K. Elmhirst, Dartington Hall, Devonshire, England; David M. Levy, M.D., former Chief-of-Staff of the Institute of Child Guidance; Mrs. Samuel A. Lewisohn, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of "The Little Red Schoolhouse," New York City; Adolf Meyer, M.D., Henry Phipps Professor of Psychiatry, The Johns Hopkins University, and Psychiatrist-in-Chief, The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Md.; Robert E. Simon, Chairman of the Education Committee, United Parents Associations of New York City and V. T. Thayer, Educational Director, Ethical Culture Schools, New York City.

The Annual Meeting of the Child Study Association on November 8 gave official recognition to the acceptance by Mrs. Bird Stein Gans of the Association's Honorary Presidency. She is succeeded as President by Mrs. Everett Dean Martin—the first change in that office since the Association's formal organization thirty-six years ago.

In accepting the Honorary Presidency, Mrs. Gans emphasized the fact that she is assuming "not only the dignities but also the activities of that office." She continued, "It would be idle for me to pretend that I give up the reins without regret, since those of you who know me well enough for that, will realize that the Association and its welfare have constituted my major interest in life and the guidance of its affairs my major occupation for so long that without that interest and without a voice in its affairs, I should be a lost soul. Indeed I fear that feeling would have overborne judgment, and that I should have hung on in spite of the conditions that made it no longer possible for me to give to the affairs of the Association the unremitting and continuous attention that its presidency demands, were it not for two thoughts. First, the realization that in an Association such as ours, there is room for an Honorary President to act as elder statesman and father confessor, and the gracious assurance of Mrs. Martin and the members of the Board of Directors, that in these roles my continued activity would be welcome. And second and of vastly more importance, the realization that through Mrs. Martin's assumption of the presidency the Association is assured of a leader pre-eminently equipped—through training and her twenty years of loyal service in the organization, the knowledge and wisdom that follow upon this experience, as well as through personality and ideals—to carry on the work to ever greater heights."

Other speakers were Mrs. Martin, who presided after having been welcomed by Mrs. Gans, Miss Patty Smith Hill of Teachers College, a co-worker with Mrs. Gans from the earlier years of the parent education movement and a personal friend of long standing, who paid her gracious tribute, and Mrs. Sidonie M. Gruenberg who gave a brief survey of the Association's present work.

Out-of-School Opportunities

Schools have not exploited extra-curricular activities with sufficient thoroughness and understanding, Augusta Alpert, Chairman of the Extra-curricular Committee of the Child Study Association, declared at the symposium on "Opportunities for the Child's Leisure Time" held at Association Headquarters on November 14. In her report on the findings of the Committee in its study of extra-curricular facilities in New York, Dr. Alpert indicated that although there was plenty of enthusiasm on the part of parents and children for such projects and a need for them particularly for the talented, the non-academically minded and the socially maladjusted child, the following deficiencies existed: lack of a unifying influence as shown in the absence of a directory until the Com-

mittee compiled one; lack of awareness of objective, whether the encouragement of a hobby, character building or some other ideal; lack of clearness as to motivation; lack of understanding of methods and technique.

Other speakers at this meeting, at which Mrs. Hugh Grant Straus presided, were representatives of several types of leisure-time activities for children. Anna Billings Gallup, Director of the Children's Museum in Brooklyn, described the growth and organization of this institution where an informal and friendly atmosphere attracts many thousands of children. Games which explain exhibits and a loan collection for advanced students are also features.

Helen Freeman Johnson, Assistant Director of Greenwich House, sketched its activities in the arts and crafts. Based on the idea that there is a natural love of art in every child, the program is designed not only for technical achievement but to enrich the child's whole life.

Mrs. A. I. Popper, President of the School Nature League, told of its work in fostering an appreciation and knowledge of nature. Through the establishment of nature rooms in public schools, the League has been able to develop one side of the child's interest which school work does not touch, adding thereby to his resources for pleasure.

Parent Education and National Planning

Edna N. White, Chairman of the National Council of Parent Education, has appointed a special committee of the Council to cooperate with the civil works department of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in its vocational, general adult and emergency preschool education programs. George D. Stoddard, Adelaide S. Baylor, Bess Goodykoontz, Mary E. Murphy, Flora Rose and Louise Stanley are serving on the committee which held its first meeting in Washington on November 11.

Museum Opportunities for Nature Study

The American Museum of Natural History has been called "The Greatest Schoolhouse in the World." Its exhibition halls are silent teachers displaying treasures to the curious. The beautiful habitat groups in which animals, birds, insects, reptiles, as well as human beings, are shown in their native surroundings, faithfully reproduce nature. There are things from the bottom of the sea, fossils dug up from the sand of Asia, skeletons of dinosaurs that lived fifty million years ago—all simply but comprehensively labelled. Temporary exhibits may from time to time display orchids, tropical fish, art work of city school children or scientific groups made by children competing in the Children's Science Fair held each December.

A free guide service is offered to members of the Museum and to school children with their teachers. For children with defective sight there are special sight conservation talks. Schools unable to visit the Museum may see specimens, slides and motion pictures through the free loan service which provided this material to ninety-three per cent of the city schools last year. A series of "How, When and Why Stories" for "children" (from four to eighty) of members of the Museum, a Junior Astronomy Club for boys and girls of junior and senior high school age which meets twice a month and publishes a bi-monthly paper containing articles written by the children themselves, and nature trails and outdoor exhibits of live animals at Bear Mountain, Palisades Interstate Park, are further ways in which the Museum serves its varied public.

A weekly schedule of events at the Museum will be mailed free of charge on request.

School Nature League Benefit

For the benefit of the School Nature League, a special performance of Walt Disney moving pictures, with a magician and a lucky number seat contest, will be held at the Plaza Theatre, 58 Street near Madison Avenue, on Thursday, December 28 at 10 a. m. Tickets are seventy-five cents and one dollar and may be procured from Mrs. Lothair S. Kohnstamm, 1185 Park Avenue.

Parent Education in Baltimore

Newly initiated activities of the Baltimore District of the Child Study Association include an evening lecture series on the topic "Bringing Up Parents" conducted by Dr. Esther L. Richards, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at The Johns Hopkins Medical School, the Committee on Art Education for Children, and a course for nursery school teachers under the leadership of Dr. Buford Johnson of The Johns Hopkins University and Mrs. Ferdinand Roten, an experienced nursery school teacher. The Nursery School Committee has also issued a pamphlet on "How to Select a Nursery School" in response to public interest in the development of these schools. The annual exhibit of children's toys and books will open on December 1. In addition to these special projects the regular work of the District is well under way with forty-eight groups now in operation, nine at headquarters, including three leadership groups, one for colored

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Forty-Fifth Anniversary Conference

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Parents and Children in a Changing Society
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In preparation for this conference, more than thirty specialists—in sociology, psychology, education, religious education, social work, economics and parent education—are now holding a series of small group meetings. These informal discussions, which have brought out some enlightening points of agreement, as well as some lively controversies, will form the basis for the presentations of the conference topics. Each of the four discussion groups will select two of its members as conference speakers.

Three Sessions: Friday, the 19th, at 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.; Saturday, the 20th, at 10:00 a.m.

Dinner Meeting: Friday, the 19th, at 7:30 p.m.

Fees: Non-members, $1.00; Members, upon presentation of membership card, $.50; Dinner, $2.75.

leaders of the Inter-Community Child Study Committee, twenty-two in schools, ten in civic centers and seven in private homes.

The World We Live In

How to convey an idea of the complex organization of civilized life to older children graphically and simply, was illustrated at the Museum of Science and Industry on November 18 in a visit which parents and their senior high school children made under the auspices of the United Parents Association in New York. Exhibits of food, clothing, shelter, transportation and electricity showed in easy understandable form the principles and processes of the machinery which is used in everyday affairs.

Christmas Good Will

A Christmas program for schools which stresses international goodwill has been prepared by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. This leaflet, containing definite program arrangements, ideas for songs, plays and games, and an index of suggested material, will be sent for five cents upon request to the League's office, 1924 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

State Child Health Institutes

The New York State Department of Health has sponsored a series of regional institutes on child health during November and December as a means of initiating and guiding the Department's plans for statewide staff education during the coming year. The program considers the child from the prenatal period through adolescence and is based on the concepts formulated by the White House Conference. In New York City where the meeting on November 10 took the form of a symposium with Elizabeth M. Gardiner, M.D. as chairman, the physical, mental and social aspects of child health were treated in addresses by Alfred F. Hess, M.D., Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg of the Child Study Association and Grace Abbott, Chief of the Children's Bureau in the Department of Labor at Washington. The psychological approach was discussed by Emma Grant Meader of Russell Sage College in Troy, N. Y. Similar programs have been carried out in Albany, Poughkeepsie, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo and Elmira with the District State Supervising Nurse in the place of meeting as the chairman of local arrangements.

Saturday Mornings
for Parents and Children

HANDCRAFTS

To meet a need for first-hand experience the Child Study Association offers a new course in which parents and children may share in constructive activity.

BLOCK PRINTING

With linoleum blocks to decorate Christmas cards, wrapping paper and textiles. A simple process of printing which may be carried out at home. 4 sessions.

CLAY MODELLING

The handling of clay to form small figurines, animal shapes or simple pottery. Decoration with paint and shellac. 4 sessions.

MARIONETTES AND MASKS

How to make and manipulate miniature figures out of inexpensive materials such as stockings and clothes pins, etc. Small masks for the figures and large decorative ones may also be made. 6 sessions.

Fourteen meetings, beginning November 25

Saturdays, at 10 A.M.

Instructor—Gertrude M. Abbihl,
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Open to non-members as well as members of the Association.

Fees: Parent and Child: 14 session course, $20. 6 session course, $10. Either 4 session course, $7. Fees include materials. Attendance of either adult or child alone may be arranged.

Child Study Association
221 West 57 Street, New York City

Books of the Year for Children

(*Continued from page* 88)

Strange Fishes and Their Strange Neighbors (60 pages) $1.25
by Paul W. Kearney — Doubleday, Doran & Co.
This book, containing rare photographs of all the fish in the New York Aquarium, is an entertaining and stimulating source book about a little known sphere of animal life.

***The Story of Earth and Sky (368 pages) $3.50**
by Carleton and Heluiz Washburne, in collaboration with Frederick Reed — The Century Co.
The origin of the earth and its life in relation to the universe, told in a thrilling narrative which skillfully differentiates fact from conjecture. Imaginary journeys project the child through time and space, clarifying difficult concepts. 9 and over.

***100,000 Whys: A Trip Around the Room (138 pages) $1.50**
by M. Ilin — J. B. Lippincott Co.
A most welcome handbook for children and adults, explaining with astonishing clarity and simplicity the scientific hows and whys of things in common use.

A Child's History of Art (443 pages) $3.50
by V. M. Hillyer and E. G. Huey — D. Appleton-Century Co.
Painting, sculpture and architecture from the prehistoric through the art of today. Copiously illustrated and well organized, but unfortunately "written down" to the child's level. 10 to 12.

Careers Ahead (312 pages) $2.50
by Joseph Cottler and Harold Brecht — Little, Brown & Co.
Narrative accounts of the better known professions and occupations—doctor, teacher, social worker, mechanic, engineer and others—suggestive to boys and girls trying to envisage possible careers. Interesting work photographs. 12 and over.

***The Carpenter's Tool Chest (209 pages) $2.00**
by Thomas Hibben — J. B. Lippincott Co.
A concise and graphic account of modern carpenters' tools and their use, with a very diverting story of their origin and development, from the earliest stone implements to the steel of today. Excellent drawings by the author. 10 and over.

***Complete Model Aircraft Manual (578 pages) $3.50**
by Edwin T. Hamilton — Harcourt, Brace & Co.
An excellent and most inclusive handbook, with clear usable plans and diagrams of 65 different models of aircraft. An index and a dealer's list add to the practical usefulness of the book. For the boy over 11 with this special interest.

Be a Puppet Showman (168 pages) $2.50
by Remo Bufano — The Century Co.
A very good book on puppets and marionettes, by a master of this subject. 10 and over.

***Uncle Sam's Government at Washington (283 pages) $2.00**
by George L. Knapp — Dodd, Mead & Co.
The high spots of political life in Washington and the development of the national government as seen by a journalist. A critique for the well informed mature young reader.

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In the Magazines

I. Is the High School Moving Ahead? By Burton P. Fowler.

II. Freeing the Secondary School for Experimentation. By Max McConn.

III. The Teacher's Relation to Adolescents. By Margaret Pollitzer.

Progressive Education, November 1933.

I. An answer to the criticism of the college—that the high school graduate is too immature to study and budget his time—pointing to definite trends, in unifying the curriculum and in individualizing it, as at Bennington and Sarah Lawrence, and in personality adjustment and guidance.

II. A description of the plan of the Committee on the Relation of School and College, which will permit a number of selected schools to send students to college without entrance examinations, beginning in 1936. A list of these schools is included.

III. Discussion of teacher-pupil relationship as it exists at the Walden School, emphasizing the importance to the teacher of a knowledge of the principles of psychoanalysis.

I. Nursery School as a Contributing Factor in Mental Health. By Esther Colby Sweet.

II. An Infant Testing Service as an Integral Part of a Child Guidance Clinic. By Edith F. Symmes.

The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, October 1933.

I. An account of the ways in which nursery schools promote mental health for the child by providing freedom to experiment with materials, companionship with other children and adequate direction by trained supervisors.

II. Methods of testing the intelligence of infants in order to predict their future mental capacities described and illustrated. Reasons for considering these methods reliable are given.

I. Mental Hygiene in Colleges and Universities. By James Rowland Angell.

II. Mental Hygiene in the School. By William J. Cooper.

III. Adjusting the Curriculum to the Child. By V. T. Thayer.

IV. Parent Education as a Mode in Mental Hygiene. By Hazel M. Cushing.

Mental Hygiene, October 1933.

I. The problem of the mental hygienist in a college is one of treatment since it is usually too late for prevention. Colleges should obtain expert mental hygiene service for their students, and universities should discover the causes of and cures for psychic diseases.

II. A discussion of the varied importance of mental hygiene in the school—as in aiding the maladjusted student, in suggesting constructive techniques of teaching character building and citizenship, and in child guidance.

III. A plea that the school be brought "into direct contact with the social order," particularly through social studies, in order to enable the child to work out his own standards of behavior and service to others.

IV. A discussion of mental hygiene for parents based on accounts by a group of mothers of the benefits received in a mental hygiene study group.

Anxieties and Worries. By Smiley Blanton. Hygeia, November 1933.

A survey of some of the more common exaggerated fears and their causes; discusses the possible personality difficulties, as well the many environmental factors, which at various stages in development may be contributing causes of maladjustment.

The Place of Art in the Education of the Child. By W. G. Constable. New Ideals Quarterly, October 1933.

An exposition of the educational theory that the creative capacities must be allowed to express themselves, with intellectual and manipulative capacities stressed only so far as they are needed for this expression.

DECEMBER RADIO PROGRAM

WEAF	Monday, 4th Mrs. Hugh Grant Straus	3:30 P.M.
WINS	Monday, 4th Josette Frank	1:45 P.M.
WEVD	Thursday, 7th Mrs. Hugh Grant Straus	8:45 P.M.
WOR	Monday, 11th Marion M. Miller	9:30 P.M.
WABC	Thursday, 14th Josette Frank	4:45 P.M.

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8. HANS BRINKER OR THE SILVER SKATES, Mary Mapes Dodge.
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11. JUST SO STORIES, Rudyard Kipling.
12. KIDNAPPED, Stevenson.
13. KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS, Henry Frith.
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16. PINOCCHIO, C. Collodi.
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19. SLEEPING BEAUTY AND OTHER TALES, told by A. T. Quiller-Couch.
20. SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON, Johann David Ryss.
21. TREASURE ISLAND, Stevenson.
22. DANIEL BOONE, by Stewart Edward White.
23. LITTLE MEN, Louisa May Alcott.
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BROOMSTICK AND SNOWFLAKE. By Johan Falkberget. Illustrated by Helen Sewell. Broomstick, the tanner's son sets out to rescue the mountain giant's daughter, Snowflake. A most amusing tale of Norway. $1.75.

FULL STEAM AHEAD! By Henry Lent. Illustrated by Earl Winslow. What boy or girl isn't curious about the insides of an ocean liner? Mr. Lent takes you on a six day voyage and together you explore the ship, meet the crew, and learn how and who works it. Vivid, active, real. $2.00.

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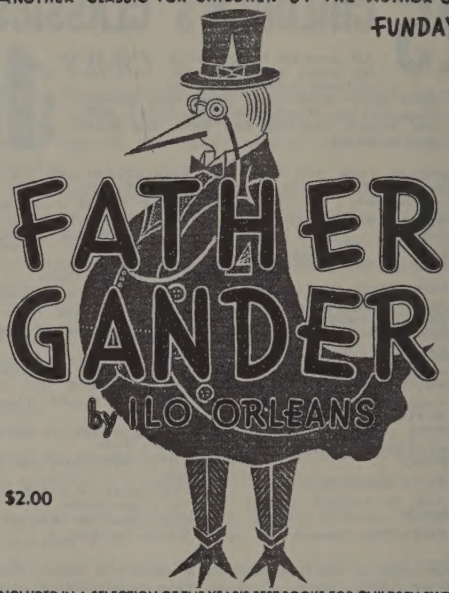

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The Editors' Page

THE difference between the creative artist and the practitioner of a mere skill is that the artist's conception of what his undertaking is, grows as fast as his ability. Faster! The skillful artisan can, with industry and attention, reach the static point where he can do this or that job as well as it can be done. Nothing static in the artist's life, ever! Before his vision, perfection grows grander and more unattainable as his means of reaching perfection improve. Creative artists, unlike business men, never "retire," but to their last breath struggle on towards the goal of "better," although they may long, long have overpassed the goals which in their youth seemed all that anyone could want. There is a mystical connection between the artist's development and his ideal—so that in the very act of seizing on the realization of his ideal, another one, finer, richer, purer, rises before him.

ANY mother knows, with no elaboration of this comparison, that, whether she will or no, life has made of her a creative artist, not an artisan. Mothers are summoned—every little young girl of a beginner among them—to the majestic joys and savage disappointments of the artist's life, not to the mild tepid pleasures of the practitioner of a skill. She is condemned and exalted to that perpetually unsatisfied longing to realize an unattainable ideal which makes the artist so infinitely happier, so infinitely more miserable, so infinitely less contented than the artisan—above all so infinitely more vital. As fast as she grows in mental grasp, in emotional richness, in skill, in wisdom, in lightness of touch and in firmness of grasp, just so much more clearly will she see how imperiously her relations with her children need more of all this than she has. The emotional woman is pierced through and through with the iron conviction of the need for more than emotions. The intellectual is filled to her last cell with the perception that her mere intelligence is a poor, pale, strengthless broken reed if not reinforced with—well, with everything she has to give.

THIS is the fate of mothers, their glorious, their tragic, their supremely fortunate destiny—to have their growing skill perpetually outgrown by their vision of what might be.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

CHILD STUDY

A JOURNAL OF PARENT EDUCATION

VOL. XI JANUARY, 1934 No. 4

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